



FOOTIE AND 45s WEEKENDS

By

Dave Moore

As lifelong Burnley Football Club fans, I am so chuffed that Bev, my Grandkids, (who are also season ticket holders) and the club, play a central role in this tale. We left Burnley in 1985 but as a family we still attend most home games and quite a few away games which, when your grandson plays grass roots football on Saturday and Sundays, can be a challenging programme at the best of times, as even the home games result in a 300 mile round trip for us! However, for three weekends in December 2023 the trips couldn't have been more worthwhile. Combining two interests that have dominated my life is a first for me and I'm still walking around with a big beaming smile on my face! To find out why, read on...

As a town Burnley has punched above it's weight in a number of ways during my lifetime, the football team being a good example of this. We've won the League, The FA Cup, played in Europe and are currently battling away against the mighty billionaires of the Premier League. The club is woven into the DNA of the townspeople as it always will. The other way it punched above it's weight was in the world of rare soul collecting. East Lancs was a hotbed of rare soul collecting and back in the mid 70s soul clubs were in abundance in the town as were the sales boxes of many of the areas premier soul collectors/sellers. Back to our tale...

At one of the home games in November (v West Ham), I was approached on the concourse by a good mate of mine 'Bob'. He told me that his friend had told him of a record collection in town that may well be up for sale as the collector had passed a while back and his brother wanted shut of the 45s that were gathering dust. I asked the obvious questions of How Many? What Genre? Has anyone sifted it yet? Bob couldn't answer any of the questions and confirmed he'd make some more enquiries. The following weekend I was up in my home town once again to watch the Mighty Clarets trounce relegation rivals Sheff Utd 5-0) and, having handed the grandkids over to their Dad on Sunday morning ended up in a post-match soul gig in Rishton, a small town a few miles away, that same afternoon. During a pretty good afternoon catching up with Chris Waterman, Ashley Fellows and Mick H, Bob turned up and relayed that he'd been told there were thousands

of records and that they were primarily RnB and Jazz. He gave me the business card of the guy with his phone number on and we arranged to try and get there the following weekend. Burnley were away to Brighton the following Saturday but Bev and I had arranged to watch the match in Burnley at our good friends and fellow Clarets Bev and Kev Parker, before us all setting off to go to the Beamish Museum in Co Durham. So, it was gonna be a tight fit to get it all done on Saturday. Fortunately Sky TV, hadn't messed about with the 3pm KO and would give me a few hours digging about.

Unfortunately Bob remembered he had his works 'do' on that day and so I rang the guy and arranged to meet him at noon. I picked up my rather 'fuzzy headed' best mate Billy (LOL!) and off we went with a pocket full of cash and the belief that we'd probably be returning with it intact.



The location was an old Mill type Building near the centre of the town. (1) Although the town's cotton heritage is well known, many of the old buildings from the industrial revolution have been demolished but there is a will in the town to preserve what can still be utilised and improvements and renovations can be found in various areas of the town. As we approached I felt sinking feeling as Tom (2) met us at the roller door and explained the records were in the cellar! I experienced visions of dark, damp cellars full of mouldy old 45s similar to the ones encountered in Philadelphia, Miami, St Louis, Chicago, and New Orleans but was pleasantly surprised to find that once we entered the underground the space it opened up to reveal a large dry room with good electrics that housed a mountain of electrical music equipment. Turntables, speakers, moogs, keyboards, Amps, 2 complete band set ups and a whole host of recording kit, mixing boards and various guitars spanning 4 decades filled the room. A quick chat with Tom revealed that he was a sound engineer, DJ, from back in the day whose brother Mal had passed a while ago. He was in the process of selling off all the equipment on his retirement from the sound business. This included his joint record collection that he and his brother built up, many as new releases. After a quick tour of the place my attention was drawn to shelves and bags full of 45s and albums sat lurking on one side of a wall and with Billy, having left his specs at home and having a head like a pneumatic drill, deciding he was a little too under the weather to sift thousands of dusty ole' 45s, I bailed in alone.

After a few minutes it became apparent that the shelves were indeed primarily 60s UK labelled RnB, Soul albeit interspersed with hits of the day by the Beatles, Rolling Stones and the odd pop hit from the same era. The first seam of the day quickly showed itself as I picked out UK Tamla Motown copies of Barbara

McNair, The Hit Pack, The Spinners ('Sweet Thing' AND 'I'll Always Love You') amongst others. A few minutes later The Marvelettes on Fontana ('Mr Postman' AND 'Twistin' Postman') made an appearance alongside a number of Oriole issues. There was also a copy of Paul Gayten's 'The Hunch' on London which I've always suspected was the first 'Motown' orientated product released in UK. We were off and running! In the next handful was a slew of Garnet Mimms on UA and Howard Tate on Verve.



Now on a normal days record hunting that would already be a great result for sure, especially in today's climate where the days of finding untouched 45s of this calibre are almost a thing of the past. I moved to the next shelf and was greeted by what I thought may well be a whole run of UK SUE labelled rnb/soul. A quick confirmation that Ernestine Anderson, Jackie Day, Danny White, Fascinations etc were present amongst the Ike and Tina, John Lee Hooker and Elmore James 45s and the smile grew even wider on this Burnley lad's face!



Having started to stack the 45s into categorized piles I came across a seam of UK Black Chess 45s, probably around 30 of them and was puzzled as to why they were all RnB/Blues by Bo Diddley, Muddy Waters, Little Milton etc, until I moved onto the next shelf to find The Gospel Classics, Ramsey Lewis, Fontella Bass, The Dells, The Radiants, Cash McCall and Jackie Ross waiting for me.

Speaking to Tom as I flicked through the 45s I learned a little bit more about his exploits and those of his brother Mal. They were both musicians who were in a local rock/rnb band in the 60s/70s. He relayed many of the places they played locally including The Imperial Ballroom in Nelson, The Birdtrap in Brierfield (which coincidentally runs a soul night there at which Bob is currently a regular DJ). As was the norm in these RnB/Soul clubs of the time, DJs would play in between the band appearances, (much like today) and Tom and his brother would take on that role in addition to Tom being the sound man and his brother a band member. Tom, it appears liked the rock side of things whilst his brother Mal leaned toward RnB/Blues and later slid into the fledgling Northern Soul sound. It was a thrill to listen to his tales of gigging around the North West and his memories of the bands and people of the time. I'd been around in the mid 70s in Burnley, even running soul nights until 1980 when I left and to think that this collection had remained unknown to me and my peers whilst we were DJing around the corner (In one case right across the road!) was fantastic. To be able to rescue it for future fan's enjoyment was even better!

One of the more prolific labels that eventually secured releases on it's own logo in the UK was the STAX imprint from Memphis. And the history of it's dealings as it strove to establish itself was all here on the shelves, told by the 45s themselves. The journey through their earlier releases on London giving way to the Atlantic logo before finally hitting the shops on their own blue label was captured on these shelves. What a shame that the familiar Blue Polydor distributed records didn't get released in sleeves and that we would have to wait until EMI got hold of the distribution to see the now famous finger clicking logo! On investigating, the Blue Stax pile I had now built up revealed that there were 6 missing, something that I will rectify shortly. The yellow Polydor and later Pye distributed records were a little more thinner on the ground which I put down to the guys interest in DJing waning as the 70s progressed.



By now I'd amassed about 650 records and the Clarets v Brighton was calling so I decided to take a chance and arrange to come back the next weekend when Burnley were at home to Everton. Tom was more than happy with that and a price for the first haul was agreed, duly paid and we parted with the agreement that we would not tell anyone about the 45s remaining and return on Friday the day before The Match in order to have a full day searching the remaining 45s. I arrived at Bev and Kev's just before kick off with what must have been the look of a Cheshire Cat!

Needless to say the trip to the Beamish was informative and entertaining, especially The Dentist! but as my friend Bev commented... you're a bit distracted aren't you Dave? LOL!

It was a nervous week as I hoped and prayed no one would find out about the collection until after I'd been through every 45 which was the plan on the Friday. I rang Tom on Thursday to confirm our appointment and that no one had been to see them in the meantime. Duly assured that no one had at 7:00am I set off alone on the 150 mile journey, Bev and Grandkids would come up on Saturday and we'd stay over after the game. By 11 am I'd picked up Billy, Bob and we were walking down those cellar steps to complete the task. Another Footie and 45 Weekend beckoned!

On arrival the three of us took a section each and pulled anything of interest out, my first delve into yet another canvas bag yielded a whole slew of Pye International RnB Series 45s. This series was designed to release foreign outings in UK and although it's early 60s outings contain many US RnB artists by 1963 the label released a mix of styles of black music including artists as diverse as Willie Dixon through to Dionne Warwick under its RnB Series banner. Blues, RnB and Soul artists of the era litter the catalogue and names as diverse as Chuck Berry, Billy Stewart, Bo Diddley, Tommy Tucker, John Lee Hooker, Sugar Pie DeSanto and Tony Clarke sit alongside each other. It won't have escaped the readers' attention that many of these artists were signed to the Chess logo which up until 1965 had no output on its own now famous black logo. This particular Pye Series lasted for just over a year before the Pink PYE logo was introduced and the label became even more diverse. For anyone interested in the development of RnB and how it laid some of the foundations for the soul explosion round the corner, the Pye International label is a great starting point. Most don't cost a king's ransom and there are one or two gems in there. As a bonus there was a pristine, sleeved blue PYE copy of Etta James – 'At Last' that I was particularly pleased to find. (3)



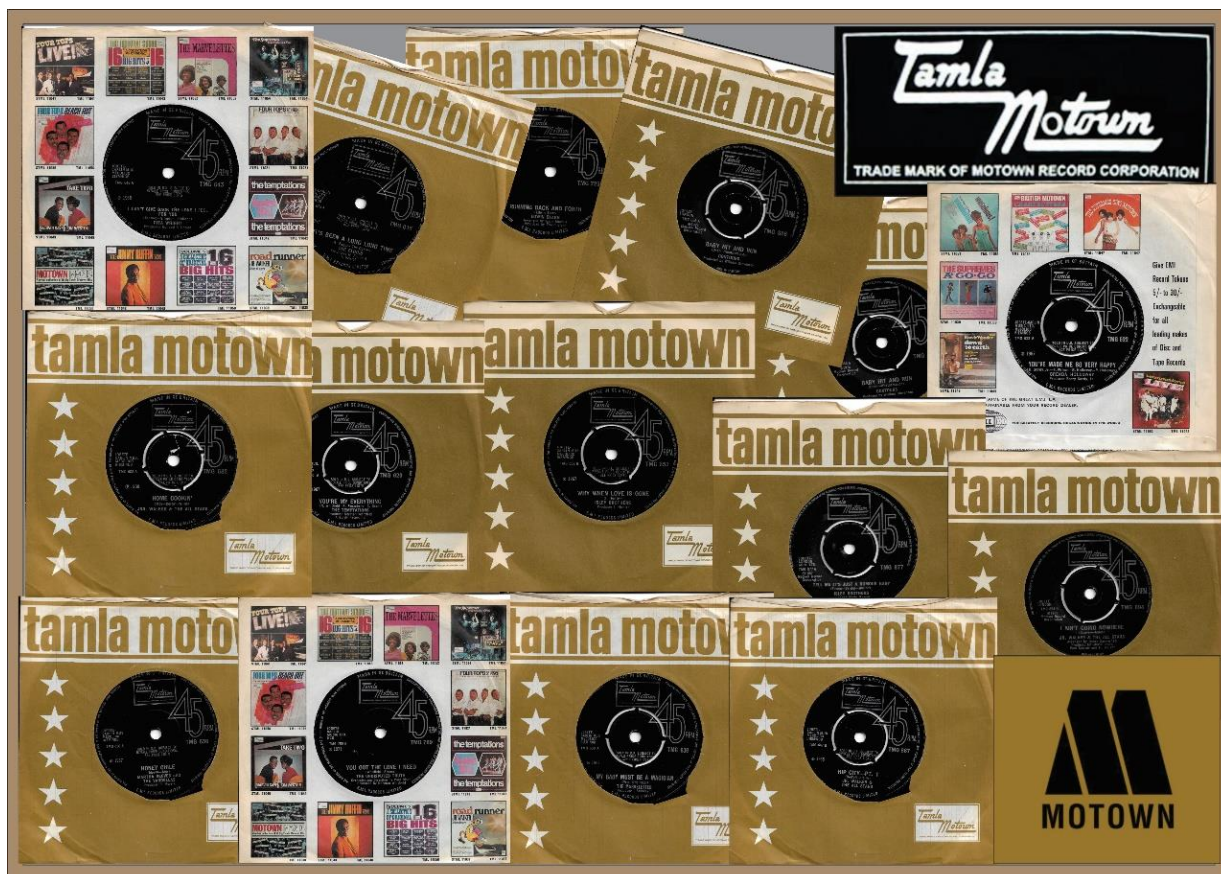
In the corner up against the LP shelves were 3 or 4 old wooden DJ record cases and they were next on the search. On opening the first one I discovered a couple more handfuls of the Chess catalogue and as I flicked through the 200 or so 45s in this particular box I picked out a number of others. At the end of that box I had piled up almost 60 of them. The search was on for the remainder! The usual suspects of Ramsey Lewis, Fontella Bass, Billy Stewart, The Dells, Jackie Ross were all there as were the likes of Gene Chadler's – 'Such A Pretty Thing' all Northern favourites but strangely no Tiffanies and not a single promo.



On unzipping another canvas bag that had seen better days the first handful delivered a fistful of Bobby Bland 45s and as any collector/soulfan knows, if Bobby's around it's best to slow down and ensure you don't miss a single 45! True to form, Bobby preceded a rather nice haul of Vocalion 45s. That included not just himself but also Tommy Neal, Bud Harper, Al TNT Braggs and Little Johnny Taylor amongst others.



The second half of the bag revealed another slew of early TMG Motown 45s. and that particular ever growing pile was enhanced by 45s from Kim Weston, Brenda Holloway, Shorty Long, Chris Clark and Jr Walker and The All Stars amongst others. I wondered if the TMGs were finished or if some of the later releases were still to be found and on opening a battered 7inch cardboard box I got my answer. The Contours, Isley Brothers, Jr Walker, Marvin and Tammi, Rita Wright and The Undisputed Truth were amongst the haul from the early 70s.



As the piles of 45s grew, I started taking a break from searching and concentrated my efforts on 'sifting' the piles we'd built for any real quality 45s in slow time. As I'd come across interesting bits I'd simply placed them on a separate pile and it was this particular pile that would now yield the 'icing on the cake'. The pile had slowly grown to about 100 x 45s all of which were Northern Soul. In amongst this pile of vinyl treasures were copies of Chubby Checker – 'You Just Don't Know' – Cameo Parkway Demo, Dee Dee Warwick – 'Worth Every Tear I Cry' – Mercury, Both Little Anthony's big Northern outings on UA, Sapphires – 'Got To Have Your Love' – HMV, Poets – 'She Blew A Good Thing' – London, Jimmy Robbins – 'I Just Can't Please You' – President, Skull Snaps – My Hang Up Is You – GSF, Ike and Tina – Dust My Broom – HMV Demo. Gene McDaniels – 'Walk With A Winner' – Liberty. It was proving to be a good afternoon!



Once I'd sorted that pile into 2 separate piles and made a mental note not to add any more but to start another 'Northern' pile I delved into the bottom shelves of the racks that held another approx. 500 x 45s. The first handful delivered a series of Beatles EPs that under normal circumstances I would have lifted but the condition proved too poor to make them worthwhile, disappointed I put them back and pulled out another handful. It was Action Time! 45s by Little Carl Carlton, The Showmen, Dee Dee Sharp, Clifford Curry, The Olympics, Minnie Epperson, Wilmer and The Dukes and Jeanette Williams were amongst that shelf's wares.



Whilst the next one gave up a handful of Dave Godin's Soul City labelled 45s, Gene Chandler, Bessie Banks and Chris Jackson amongst them.



As the afternoon drew to a close I once again turned my attention to the mounting stacks of 45s that we'd accumulated and checked each one again. Although none of the records were mint and unplayed they were in surprisingly goon nick to say they'd been shelved down here for god knows how long and in amongst the piles we'd set aside we confirmed hauls of Atlantic, Polydor, Direction, Monument, Columbia, Capitol Mercury and Track that were confirmed as keepers.





As I checked the Stateside pile that had also grown quite healthily, I was pleasantly surprised to see quite a few there that would soon nestle in my own collection that I'd not owned since 1990 when I actioned off my then UK collection. The likes of Sammy Ambrose, The Incredibles, Mickey Lee Lane, The Sharpees The OJays and Bettye Lavette would be returning to 'Casa Moore' for sure!



As we reached the end of the shelves and emptied the last couple of cardboard boxes from which we added to the now lopsided stacks of records. I turned my attention to number of promos that I'd stacked during the afternoon's activities and these were duly transferred to the 'we're taking these' stacks alongside the US 45 stack that had crept up on me as I'd simply placed anything familiar in to a pile and was quite pleased when I checked through the stack again.



During the 2 days of hunting, I'd not really taken much notice of the US 45s we came across so it was something of a nice surprise to realise we had actually fared quite well on the US records too!



It was now time to finalise a price that both Tom and I were happy with and once that was concluded and the cash exchanged we boxed another 650 up and transferred to the car upstairs. It had been a great couple of days, rooting through the records had taken me back to the mid 70s soul clubs around East Lancashire and reminded me of the fantastic times we had. Memories of record guys like Steve Bradley, Barrie Waddington, Dave Taylor, Guy Hennigan, Alan Hughes etc, all happy to educate a fledgling soul collector. The mad, cross country trips to hit the record bars of venues and the great trips home comparing what we'd managed to snag.

That evening we sat around at Billy's cherry picking the haul to everyone's satisfaction, as Bob left with his particular bagful, Billy and I slowly sifted the 45s to decide which we would keep and which we might possibly move on. We both decided that apart from a few 45s that would be given to close friends, we would absorb them into our collections. The collection we'd stumbled over would stay together albeit in 2 locations.

After a night on Billy's settee surrounded by records it was 'up and at 'em for' breakfast with my sister Julie and Billy before I picked up the Grandkids and Bev from their Dad who'd driven up from Malvern and after a chaotic lunch we hit Turf Moor. Despite a poor performance against our ex manager Sean Dyche's team Everton, in which 3 ex Burnley players played a crucial role in our 0-2 defeat, I wasn't quite as miserable as the kids! An overnight with the kids at our second home (Premier Inn - where the kids fall asleep watching Match Of The Day!) and next morning their Dad picked them up after a hearty breakfast and Bev and I made our way to Billys to pick up almost 1000 x 45s.

The drive home was different than usual. Our Mighty Clarets been well beaten again but the chat was decidedly upbeat in our car!

Jan 2024

ATLAST

Lyric by MACK GORDON
Music by HARRY WARREN

Slowly and freely

mp

with pedal

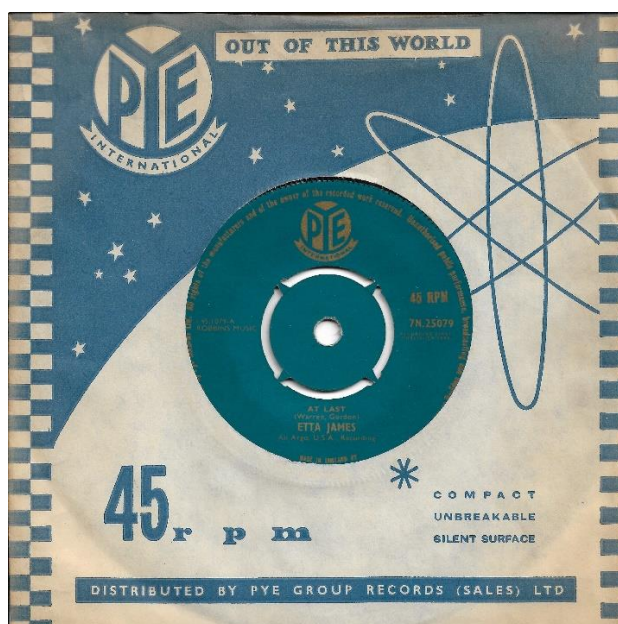
Slowly, in four

At last,
my love,
has come —

long —
My love — by days
are — yes,

and life is
a song

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1. At the request of Tom I have not divulge the exact location of the building.
2. I have used a psydonymn for ‘TOM’ and for his brother ‘MAL’ as he wasn’t keen on his identity or that of his location being made public. However, if anyone is interested in buying any LPs or Speakers, Amps,Technics Turntables, Sound Gear etc I’d be happy to put you in contact with him.
3. Etta James – ‘At Last’ was my Son and Daughter In Law’s first dance at their wedding and I intend to frame the 45 alongside the sheet music and a picture of the happy couple on the dancefloor.